

Good Evening,

Please find my statement from this evening's SEAC public comment period below. Please let me know if there are any questions.

Regards,
Theresa Wesley

Good Evening. I am one of the many parents concerned with the new "Parent Statement" that was quickly and quietly added to the IEP form.

The IEP is a legal document. Every single word on this form matters. LCPS went from a one paragraph, fairly easy to understand consent statement, which spoke of "mutual cooperation" and where I declared I had a "basic understanding of my rights" to a complex, convoluted, and very legal sounding 5-paragraph statement.

As a parent, I must be able to give informed consent to any changes or implementation of my child's IEP. As written – I can't. I do know that I no longer see the words "mutual cooperation" or that by signing I am declaring I have a "basic understanding of my rights."

Where do I even start with my questions and concerns? In Paragraph 1 – where it talks about the school board determining where and for how many days my child is placed in a particular environment? How many times did we hear this summer that the IEP team determines what is best for the student?

Paragraph 2 – where it speaks of services increasing and decreasing proportionately? How is this not predetermination? The IEP team needs to look at the whole child – including each environment or combination of environments the child is in. And it once again cites the school board placing children.

Paragraph 3 –the "school closures" list grew exponentially. I think most of us understood that if school was closed for weather, teacher planning, etc. that our students would not receive services. But pandemics? – yup – we're in one – when does one start? End? Who determines it? What about the statement that says if a child cannot participate for health or safety reasons – who's determining that? That doesn't sound like a school closure to me.

Paragraph 4 – once again it cites the school board. I very much respect the school board, but I'm starting to wonder if they should start attending IEP meetings with how many times they're cited here. Also, I don't believe policy 5310 has been updated. Which currently states any changes to an IEP requires a meeting. That is not what this paragraph says. And yes, I do know I can call an IEP meeting any time.

And finally Paragraph 5 – probably the paragraph that is closest to the prior statement I can find in here.

This statement is filled with language that either has parents signing away rights or the appearance that we are signing away our rights. It has already been interpreted multiple ways by multiple people.

What is LCPS truly trying to say with it? How will the lawyers and courts interpret this, if parents end up in that situation? It's not transparent or easy to understand. This is not a proactive statement. It is confrontational and convoluted.

Why the rush to roll this out so quickly, without any explanation, right before the most challenging school year any of us have ever faced? This new statement should be pulled back, properly vetted, clarified, and an explanation communicated prior to rolling such a massive change.